DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 420 605 SO 028 840

AUTHOR Armon, Joan
TITLE The Waldorf Curriculum as a Framework for Moral Education: One Dimension of a Fourfold System.
PUB DATE 1997-03-00
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, March 24-28, 1997).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Codes of Ethics; *Ethical Instruction; Ethics; Integrity; Models; *Moral Development; Moral Values; Qualitative Research; Values
IDENTIFIERS *Waldorf Educational Theory

ABSTRACT

This paper examines moral education as a holistic structure that evolves from the interplay between the educational applications of anthroposophy, students' developmental needs, the curriculum, as indicated by Rudolf Steiner, and teachers' roles in fashioning the curriculum. The methodology draws upon the qualitative research paradigm of educational connoisseurship and criticism. Data sources include observations and interviews in two classrooms in an urban Waldorf school. Findings reveal that teachers guide students artistically to balance thinking, feeling, and willing in the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness. The overarching goal is to help children build a moral impulse within so that they can choose, in freedom, what it means to live morally. The study suggests that some Waldorf practices may contribute to moral education in public and private schools where educators seek to educate students fully. (EH)

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ED 420 605

The Waldorf Curriculum as a Framework for Moral Education:

One Dimension of a Fourfold System

Paper presented to the annual American Educational Research Association conference in Chicago.

March 1997

SO 028 840

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Joan Armon
Jefferson County Public Schools
and University of Denver
1133 17th Street
Golden, Colorado 80401

Abstract

The Waldorf curriculum as a framework for moral education is powerful because it interacts with other unique dimensions of Waldorf education. The purpose of this paper is to examine moral education as a wholistic structure that evolves from the interplay between the educational applications of Anthroposophy, students' developmental needs, the curriculum as indicated by Rudolf Steiner, and teachers' roles in fashioning the curriculum.

The methodology draws upon the qualitative research paradigm of educational connoisseurship and criticism. Data sources include observations and interviews in two classrooms in an urban Waldorf school.

Findings reveal that teachers guide students artistically to balance thinking, feeling, and willing in the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness. The overarching goal is to help children build a moral impulse within so that they can choose, in freedom, what it means to live morally. The study suggests that some Waldorf practices may contribute to moral education in public and private schools where educators seek to educate students fully.

Introduction

> We have, then, to approach the curriculum in quite a different way. Our approach to it in fact has been such that we must put ourselves in the position of being able to create it ourselves at any moment, being able to read from the seventh, the eighth, the ninth, the tenth year of the child what we ought to do during these years. . . I spoke about the morality of education. This morality of education has to be put into practice during the actual lessons we give in the classroom. (Steiner [1919] 1976, 189)

The Waldorf curriculum as a framework for a morality of education has in large part to do with a dynamic interplay of four dimensions within the activity of a Waldorf school. In the preceding passage, Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian philosopher, educator, and scientist who founded the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart in 1919, provides insight into the unique approach to curriculum that appears in Waldorf schools. He contrasts the approach to curriculum in Waldorf schools with the way "ordinary teachers approach the 'Official Document' that outlines curriculum in government schools ([1919] 1976, 188-189). Steiner suggests that the difference involves at least four dimensions: the educational applications of Anthroposophy[1] that Steiner is explaining in the lecture quoted above, the clues children give regarding their needs at various ages, the curriculum that manifests during actual lessons in the classroom, and the creative contribution of teachers in fashioning the curriculum. It is the dynamic interaction between these four dimensions that renders the Waldorf curriculum a powerful framework for education in the moral realm. A morality of education evolves as teachers guide students artistically to balance thinking, feeling, and willing in the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness. The goal is to help children build a moral impulse within so that they have the foundation upon which to choose, in freedom, what it means to live morally. Although unknown in many contemporary educational circles, the Waldorf

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[1]Steiner presents Anthroposophy as a spiritual science. It is formulated to stimulate investigation of the whole of human life by penetrating into the hidden nature of the human being. (Steiner [1927] 1965, 6,7)

approach to education offers an innovative model of moral education that may provide strategies applicable to other educational settings.

This particular analysis of Waldorf education began four years ago when I investigated the components of the Waldorf history curriculum as implemented in two Waldorf schools. In a subsequent investigation I focused on Waldorf teachers' roles in implementing curriculum, and in a third study I compared how two Waldorf educators and two public school educators defined and delivered moral education.

It is the third study that provides data for this paper based on observations and interviews in two classrooms at Spruce Park Waldorf School.[2] The school is in a quiet, tree-filled neighborhood of modest homes built in the 1930s and 40s. Residents are mostly European American with several African American and Mexican American families. One of the state's busiest interstate highways is about a mile away, making the school easily accessible to parents who transport their children from all parts of the metro area. Of the 310 students in the kindergarten through grade twelve school, six are African-American, six are Mexican-American, five are Asian-American, one is Hawaiian, and two are orphans recently adopted from Romania. Remaining students are European-American. Most students are from solidly middle-class homes, with a few from upper-middle class families. About fifteen percent of the student population receives some degree of financial assistance to pay the $5,200 annual tuition.

Drawing upon the qualitative research methodology of educational connoisseurship and criticism (Eisner 1991), I spent three consecutive weeks in Mr. Hoechter's high school human biology class and three consecutive weeks in Mr. Cooper's fourth grade classroom at Spruce Park. The aim of observations and interviews was to generate descriptions, interpretations, evaluations, and thematics to disclose what constitutes moral education in Waldorf classrooms. Additionally, I returned for visits to the fourth grade classroom once per month during the winter and spring quarters and attended special events at the school, such as the Christmas

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[2]Names of participants and of the school have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

Faire and an evening meeting for parents. I did not return to the high school human biology class because Mr. Hoechter was a visiting instructor from Austria who spent only one three-week block at Spruce Park. Throughout the research process, I integrated my perspectives, first, as a researcher committed to constructing an account of teachers' work that integrates their perspectives; second, as a practicing public school teacher; and, third, as a sporadic reader of Anthroposophical literature during the past two decades.

Initially, my intention in writing this paper was to write only about the Waldorf curriculum as a distinctive framework for moral education. However, I found I could not examine the curriculum in isolation from the remaining features of a Waldorf school. I struggled to answer the question, "What is it that makes the Waldorf curriculum a unique instrument for educating children morally?" To organize my thinking, I turned to J.G. Bennett's (1993) concept of reciprocity that occurs when four dimensions or arenas of a context interact to create a wholistic structure. Bennett, a British mathematician, scientist, and philosopher was a student of G. Gurdjieff and P.D. Ouspensky. He developed systematics as a tool for understanding underlying relationships that contribute to a wholistic structure. The tetrad is one of Bennett's systems, and I use it here as a conceptual framework. The tetrad system is comprised of four dimensions that interrelate to create a whole. Ideally, the interaction among four dimensions moves between the spiritual and physical realms. Here, Anthroposophy represents the spiritual realm; students' needs, the curriculum, and teachers' work represent the physical realm (see Figure 1). Furthermore, the four dimensions interlock as they interact reciprocally to create the whole (see Figure 2).

In this paper, I examine moral education as a wholistic structure that evolves from the interplay between Anthroposophy, students' developmental needs, the curriculum, and Waldorf teachers' roles in fashioning the curriculum. I begin by summarizing moral education as a wholistic structure before turning to brief definitions of the four dimensions, with particular emphasis upon the curriculum. I conclude with an appraisal of moral education at Spruce Park and suggest potential applications the Waldorf approach may have to other educational settings.

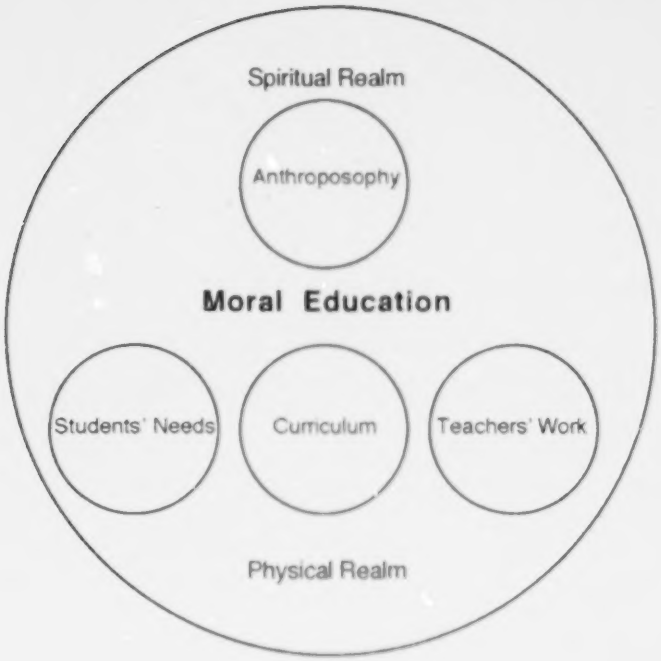

Figure 1: The Structure of Moral Education and the Four Contributing Dimensions

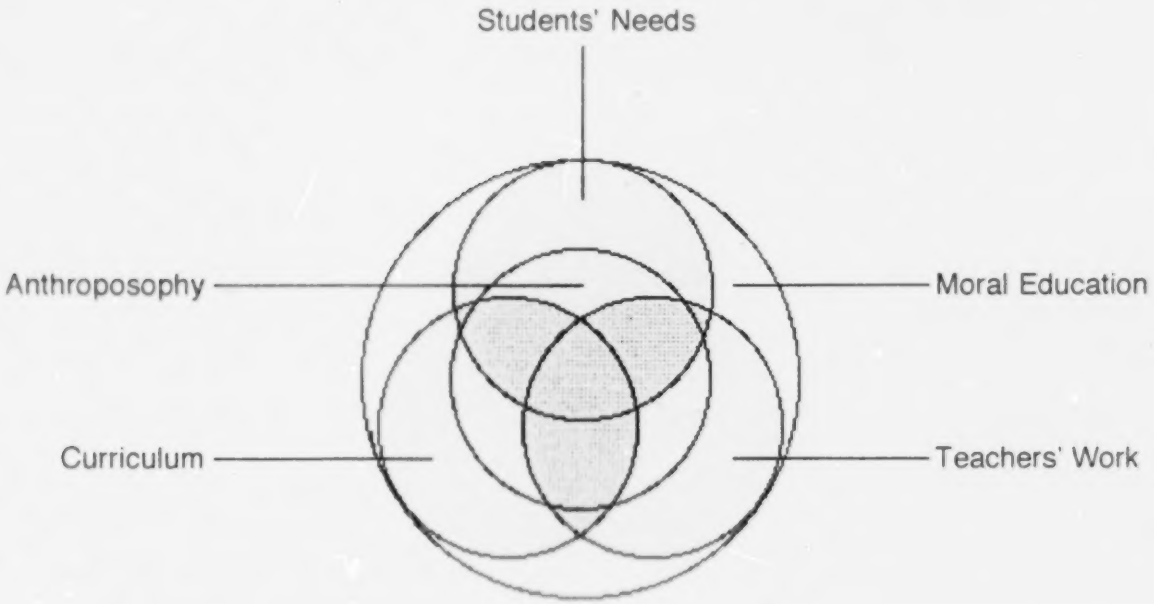

Figure 2: Four Interactive Dimensions That Contribute to the Wholistic Structure of Moral Education in a Waldorf School

Moral Education in the Waldorf School: A Wholistic Structure

Moral education in a Waldorf school emerges as a wholistic structure comprised of four dimensions of activity. The teachings of Anthroposophy, the needs of students, the curriculum, and the work of teachers all contribute to a type of moral education that is distinctive. Moral education in a Waldorf school is distinctive due not only to these four interacting spheres but to three foundational concepts that Steiner introduces: freedom, interest, and an artistic attitude that builds moral imagination. The first concept, freedom, arises from Steiner's insight that divinity lives within every individual soul, and morality therefore emerges from each human's individual nature. According to Steiner, laws of morality such as commandments are external to the individual and submission to them does not create an individual's deepest moral impulse. Moral laws become part of a person's moral fabric only if:

> [A]s an *individual* he experiences their thought-content as a living spiritual reality within himself. It is within man's thinking that freedom lives; the will is not free directly; it is the thought that gives power to the will that is free.
>
> Thus already in my *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* I had to stress freedom of thought when referring to the moral nature of the will. (Steiner [1923] 1977, 291)

The concept of freedom in regard to morality leads to Steiner's idea of ethical individualism ([1894] 1986, 187) in which the free spirit acts according to intuitions selected from among a range of ideas that translate into action. Steiner relates these ideas to education by asking teachers to be "practical philosophers of freedom" (Steiner [1924] 1982, 89), not forcing religious feeling into the child but instead awakening beliefs which exist already in every human being. The teacher's function is that of an awakener, and adults do not yet "touch the force of the inner, free individuality. We educate through nature and do not interfere with the soul and spirit" (89). A proper foundation during the early years enables children to develop moral impulses from which they can form their own moral judgments in freedom after puberty. How do teachers actually develop these essential moral impulses while preserving the child's nature? Steiner suggests that it is through interest and an artistic attitude that teachers build students' moral imaginations.

Interest in each child is what teachers must have in order to educate morally. A similar idea appears in contemporary educational circles as the concept of caring, put forth most notably by Noddings (1992)[3]. For Steiner, the concept of human interest in others is attention that elicits compassion and contributes to understanding. He explains:

> What is it that enables us to have a relationship with our surroundings? It is what we may call our interest in things. This word 'interest' expresses something that in a moral sense is extremely significant . . . Our moral impulses are in fact never guided better than when we take proper interest in objects or beings. (Steiner [1912] 1995a, 47)

Steiner continues this passage by asking his audience what the precondition is for devoting oneself to helping a child grow morally. He answers that it is this concept of first taking an interest in a child, which goes beyond moral preaching. By taking an interest in a child, the educator draws upon compassion and enters into a deeper understanding of each child. "Right understanding, right interest, calls forth from the soul the right moral conduct" (48). Thus, interest, in conjunction with freedom, are foundational concepts for Steiner's ideas about moral education. How do teachers build upon the concept of interest to awaken morality in children? It is through children's natural artistic attitude that teachers can awaken the child's moral imagination.

An artistic attitude is a natural part of the individual but needs to be awakened so that children can build a moral imagination. In the following passage, Steiner explains how educators in a Waldorf school can develop moral impulses through an artistic attitude:

> The essential thing now is that, in place of the religious element, the natural artistic response to the world shall make its appearance. . . . this purely human artistic element in the child includes what now appears as a moral relationship to the world. (Steiner [1924] 1982, 87)

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3 Noddings's concept of caring is an ethical orientation based upon feminist thinking that begins with the relation between mother and child. Although acts of caring are not limited by gender, it is the maternal perspective that exemplifies caring thought and energy directed toward fostering the growth of the child. Love, rather than duty, motivates moral action, resulting in engrossment in the needs of the other.

A moral relationship to the world does not develop by giving children moral precepts or commands; instead, examples of morality through pictures appeal to the child's imagination. Steiner's rationale is that ethical ideals emanate from the moral imagination of the individual. A rich moral imagination stimulates intuitions that direct the will. A person can then translate ethical ideals into moral action. Steiner recommends that adults can best develop children's moral imagination according to an Anthroposophical view of human development.

In short, the endeavor to educate children morally in a Waldorf school calls for a unique approach based upon Steiner's concepts of freedom of the individual to draw upon the self for ethical ideals, of interest that teachers focus on children and cultivate among children, and of an artistic attitude that teachers seek to develop in children so that the moral imagination flourishes. Four interactive dimensions permit these concepts to manifest in classrooms, each of which I summarize in the next section.

Four Dimensions that Contribute to Moral Education

Moral education in a Waldorf school cannot manifest in classrooms based merely upon Steiner's concepts of freedom, interest, and artistic attitude. It is the interaction between at least four dimensions that produces a wholistic structure of moral education in a Waldorf school. The four dimensions of activity include Anthroposophy, students' needs, the curriculum, and teachers' work. For the purposes of this paper, I focus particularly on the curriculum with only brief definitions of Anthroposophy, students' needs, and teachers' work.

Anthroposophy as Related to Education

The spiritual science of Anthroposophy is an outgrowth of Steiner's spiritual perceptions and of his desire to create an alternative to the Theosophical Society in 1913. Anthroposophy is the investigation of human life that penetrates into the hidden nature of the human being. Steiner defines Anthroposophy as a path of "Knowledge, to guide the Spiritual in the human being to the Spiritual in the universe. . . only they can be anthroposophists who feel certain questions on the nature of man and the universe as an elemental need of life" (McDermott 1984, 415).

Steiner states that education based on Anthroposophy is not limited to the material world but can provide true knowledge of the whole human. He explains:

> In trying to characterize our education I have had to point out again and again that we stand with reverent awe before the self of man who has been placed by the Divine Powers in the world, helping this self to develop. And this self is not truly understood, unless it is understood in the spirit. It is denied when it is only understood in matter. (Steiner [1924] 1982, 95)

Because Anthroposophical educators seek to teach in both the spiritual and physical realms, they are concerned with more than transmitting subject-matter knowledge. While the process of transmitting knowledge and basic skills is a part of Anthroposophical education, teachers focus equally, if not more, on establishing what Uhrmacher (1993a) calls nontechnical conditions that include image, rhythm, movement, and story. Through these types of nontechnical conditions, Waldorf educators engage in a process that awakens inner human capacities and balances the faculties of thinking, feeling, and willing so that students acquire a conception of what it means to be wholly human (Steiner [1919] 1976, 9 - 10). Steiner's ideas emanate from the spiritual realm, however, and it is the other three dimensions of activity that ground his Anthroposophical ideas in the physical realm. The next dimension I consider is the needs of students, as those needs bring meaning to Anthroposophical ideals, the curriculum, and teachers' work.

Needs of The Students

Steiner emphasizes that it is the nature of the child that directs the curriculum ([1924] 1974, 65-66). The child's needs also direct teachers' work, since teachers are to read from the child's nature what is appropriate to teach in regard to both subject matter and moral development. For appropriate moral education to occur, the child's needs, the curriculum, and teachers' work must interact reciprocally in the physical realm. The guiding principle from the spiritual realm is Anthroposophy that suggests practical and artistic activities to foster the harmonizing of the spiritual and physical selves of children. In a Waldorf school, teachers' beliefs about children's needs emerge from Steiner's writings. Steiner speaks about child development in three general stages. The first stage, between birth and the change of teeth, is a period in which children learn primarily through

imitation of people around them. During this time children develop primarily the physical body. The second stage, between the change of teeth and puberty, is a time when children learn by accepting on authority what adults around them teach. Children develop not only the physical body during these years but also the etheric body. Steiner describes the etheric body as one member of the human's nature, which he saw through his inner, spiritual sight ([1909] 1965, 19-24). At puberty, children begin to learn and relate to the world through individual judgment. The onset of puberty is marked by the unfolding of the astral body, another envelope of energy around the etheric and physical bodies. There are also higher members that make up the ego body: the sentient soul, the intellectual soul, and the consciousness soul ([1919] 1966, 58-62). The first three, lower members are the ones with which the classroom teacher is particularly concerned in the elementary grades, however. It is essential for teachers to understand these stages as they respond to students' developmental needs via the curriculum, their teaching strategies, and applications of Anthroposophy.

Adolescence is a period that particularly requires teachers' understanding. According to Mr. Hoechter, the human biology teacher at Spruce Park, teachers of adolescents recognize the challenges students face as they leave the world of childhood behind with its rich, pictorial images acquired through stories that satisfied their lively imaginations. Children are connected to the world through doing, whereas adolescents are connected to the world through their thinking. The stories of childhood no longer satisfy adolescents and they must utilize conceptual thinking as an avenue to understanding the world. In the moral realm, adolescents must draw upon the moral imagination they acquired through artistic activities in their childhoods so that they can now make moral judgments with their emerging intellectual powers. Mr. Hoechter explains that adolescents have a difficult time, as he describes:

> When children grow older they get so disconnected it's like a desert for them in adolescence, which is a very painful feeling, a tremendous awareness of death forces, as though they are going through a bottleneck and have to fight themselves out of it. If you make education too abstract, you kill off these creative forces that counterbalance these death forces they are facing.

This sense of a lonely battle that adolescents must wage is what guides Mr. Hoechter as he plans the classroom environment and instruction. Mindful of the emerging "death forces" his students must confront within themselves as part of the natural aging process, he seeks to help students maintain a healthy balance between death and life forces in his classroom.

Thus, children in the elementary school years have unique needs that Waldorf teachers recognize as growth of the physical and etheric bodies. Teachers seek to balance children's powers of thinking, feeling, and willing by presenting learning in a pictorial manner. Teachers of adolescents recognize students' unfolding astral bodies and facilitate balance between thinking, feeling, and willing by ameliorating the impact of emerging death forces as students develop intellectually. Thus, child development is one significant dimension within the Waldorf school that interacts reciprocally by informing and being informed by Anthroposophical beliefs, the curriculum, and teachers' work to create the structure of moral education. Steiner's recommendations for practical application of Anthroposophy as related to students' needs are visible through the curriculum, which is the topic of following section.

The Waldorf Curriculum

The Waldorf curriculum is unique in its contribution to moral education due to at least three significant features, each based upon insights about human development and upon the purposes of education according to Anthroposophy. The first feature is the freedom that Steiner encourages teachers to use as they apply his curricular recommendations in an artistic manner. The second feature is the thematic structure he proposes for each grade level according to his notions of child development, and the third feature is period teaching, or block scheduling, that Steiner suggests. I will comment on each feature to show how the curriculum contributes to a distinctive type of moral education in Waldorf schools, then briefly compare Waldorf and public school curricula.

First, freedom to interpret and apply the curriculum as teachers see fit is an outgrowth of Steiner's intentions when he suggests curricular guidelines. Steiner intends the curriculum to be a malleable dimension of Waldorf education and

presents his ideas as "indications" to teachers who taught in the first Waldorf schools (Steiner [1919] 1976, 189). Steiner bases these indications upon his insights about stages of human development and upon the purposes of education, yet his indications are not intended as mandates to teachers. Instead, Steiner urges teachers to create the curriculum themselves at every moment, knowing full well that the curriculum can be effective only if teachers exercise freedom to interpret it according to their own inner and outer work and in response to students' developmental needs in light of Anthroposophical teachings. Cognizant of their freedom to interpret the curriculum, teachers nevertheless work within the curricular boundaries of suggested themes and according to advice from more experienced colleagues, both of which provide continuity and a framework for moral education at each grade level. For example, Mr. Cooper, the fourth grade teacher at Spruce Park, adapts the curriculum according to his own commitments and to societal issues when he presents a state history study to his fourth graders. After spending the month of September instructing students about events and people that shaped the state's history, Mr. Cooper inserts a true account of the first woman to climb a challenging mountain in the state. In addition to describing the female mountain climber's contribution to state history, Mr. Cooper also describes the woman's courage in vivid language. He underscores the fact that women, as well as men, possess and demonstrate courage. Mr. Cooper adds this information to the usual state history block as students learn academic details about the shelter, clothing, food, transportation, and tools typical of the era. Students enter Mr. Cooper's account via illustrations and handwritten text in their State History main lesson, or blank, books. This curricular adaptation reflects Mr. Cooper's freedom to draw upon his commitment to gender equity so that his students become aware of the contributions of women in the state. He aims to implant the ideals of justice and equality. Thus, Mr. Cooper freely adapts the curriculum so that it contributes to students' moral education in a wholistic sense, yet he continues to draw upon the suggested curriculum as he structures study blocks throughout each year.

The second feature is the thematic curriculum that Steiner recommends for students in grades kindergarten through twelve that teachers use as they guide

students' moral development (Steiner [1919] 1992, 19-21). It is a unifying feature that all five of the Waldorf teachers I observed over the past four years use as a guide when they plan instruction for each day, block, and year. Table 1 displays the broad thematic topics that Steiner suggests for the first eight grades (21).

Table 1
Steiner's Indications for Thematic Topics

Grade	Topic
1	Fairy Tales
2	Animal Stories in Fables
3	Old Testament Stories
4	Scenes from Ancient History
5	Scenes from Medieval History
6	Scenes from Modern History
7	Stories of Various Races and Tribes
8	Knowledge of the Races

These topics are ones that most Waldorf teachers select at each grade level because teachers believe that Steiner has genuine insight into children's needs at each stage of development and into the appropriate curriculum for each stage. Additional topics augment the theme at each grade level, such as nature tales in grades one and two, house building and farming in grade three, and, in grade four, state history, Norse mythology, and humans' relationship to the animal kingdom. An example of subtopics within a theme appear in Mr. Cooper's fourth grade. To stimulate students' academic, experiential learning of state history as well as their moral learning in the form of gratitude for everyday products, Mr. Cooper took his class to live on a rural farm for one week. Students had the opportunity to grind wheat, bake bread, milk cows, churn butter, care for animals, and perform other duties that represent farm life during the state's early history. Rather than relying on intellectual discussion with students, Mr. Cooper utilized stories, verses, crafts, and songs of the era to develop students' pictorial images of life ways, struggles, and

issues in an earlier period. This is one instance of how themes at each grade level integrate learning in the practical realm through activities from everyday life with learning in the symbolic realm through stories, myths, and music of earlier periods. A link between the practical and symbolic spheres emerges through accounts of heroines and heroes who lived in various cultures and time periods studied at each grade level. Heroines and heroes lived in the practical world yet symbolically demonstrated principles of the divine world. Mr. Cooper explains that heroines and heroes embedded within each thematic topic provide models of goodness that awaken children to their own divinity. He reflects, for example, upon his goals as a class teacher who stays with his students from first through eighth grades. When his students were first graders, his goal was to hold the qualities of fairy tale kings and queens from different cultures before his students through vivid storytelling and artistic activities. During the second grade study of fables, his goal was to feature the qualities of exemplars such as St. Francis of Assisi and for his class as third graders, the qualities of the Old Testament Moses. Now that his students are in fourth grade, he introduces the characteristics of Norse gods who must deal with the intertwining threads of good and evil within themselves and the world around them. The curriculum at each grade, then, provides teachers with broad themes for educating students morally in the practical and spiritual realms.

At the high school level, Steiner's indications guide Mr. Hoechter as he implements curriculum at Spruce Park. While the history curriculum in high school includes the epics, history, and great people of India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Egypt, science study for ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students in Mr. Hoechter's class focuses on the study of human biology. The study flows from Steiner's recommendation that students in this age group should understand what a human being is as an individual:

> Make man intelligible as an individual being. You can find a great deal for this in Anthroposophy. There is no other theme where you can gather so much information out of Anthroposophy without running the risk of being blamed for teaching Anthroposophy. This is the objective truth; physical man with his organs and their processes [can be] seen as part of his soul and spirit. (Stockmeyer 1991, 97)

Mr. Hoechter draws upon Steiner's curricular indications, as well as upon his own thorough knowledge of Anthroposophy, teaching, and teacher education, to create a three-week human biology unit in which he presents the human as an individual being. Table 2 summarizes how Mr. Hoechter differentiates the curriculum for the various ages within his science class.

Table 2
Mr. Hoechter's Human Biology Curriculum

Grade	Topic
9	Anatomy Through Factual Information
10	Physiology Between Polarities
11	Anatomy and Physiology in Depth, The Microcosm Within the Macrocosm
12	Science Study Reflects Unity Between Self and World

Ninth graders require factual information because, as Mr. Hoechter explains, they "need crystal clear information, very factual. They have so much chaos within themselves that you should help them come to balance with their own human body. The main theme is polarity. They see things in black and white." Because ninth graders are so vulnerable, Mr. Hoechter avoids discussing their feelings in the course of science lessons. Tenth graders are less chaotic within themselves, and Mr. Hoechter designs a curriculum that provides instruction between polarities, integrating poetry and discussions about feelings during science study. He explains his rationale:

> Life is not only black and white now for this age group and human health is a delicate balance between polarities. The circulatory system and hormones, for example, is too confusing for ninth graders when you go into the process side of things, but is right for tenth graders.

Eleventh graders have more balance than the ninth and tenth graders because they have their feet planted more firmly on the Earth. As such, eleventh graders are able to study the human body in more detail through microbiology with the microscope,

make fine distinctions, and learn about body processes. Twelfth grade students are able to recognize the concept of unity between themselves and the world. They study all life forms through zoology, geology, paleontology, and botany. The rationale for such topics in the high school science curriculum arises from Steiner's indications to teachers that students require a living presentation of earth, plant, animal, and human life so that they acquire a right relationship with the historical life of humanity on earth (Stockmeyer 1991, 98). Overall, Mr. Hoechter's science curriculum reflects his goal of teaching about relationships between the microcosm and the macrocosm, such as the individual within the cosmos or the cell within the body. He presents the science curriculum to expand students' knowledge of the world and helps students to "see how things can be coherent, giving a more profound basis of understanding life in more depth and from there giving students a basis to ground themselves. These children are spiritual beings who incarnate." Thus, moral education that teaches students to view themselves in relation to all life and to integrate the physical and spiritual aspects of themselves are ongoing aims from kindergarten to high school.

The third feature is block scheduling, which Steiner calls "period teaching" ([1924] 1974, 84). He suggests period teaching to counter the effects of several subjects each day that harm children in their soul lives. Studying several school subjects per day contributes to fragmentation in children's thinking and causes children to absorb learning in one lesson that is then overshadowed in the lesson immediately following. To ensure that children have the opportunity to concentrate on and fully absorb one subject at a time, Steiner suggests curricular topics with the intention that each topic, and related topics, be studied for four to six weeks during the main lesson each morning. In Mr. Cooper's fourth grade, for example, students spend more than a month immersed in the practical and symbolic elements of Norse history, myths, Norse designs on shields they make, and on a Norse myth the class dramatizes for the entire school. In this arrangement, Mr. Cooper does not adhere to a fixed timetable but proceeds through the block flexibly according to students' needs and interests. Certain subjects, such as arithmetic, continue as a thread throughout the year in the form of frequent reviews, as Steiner recommends.

Moreover, Mr. Cooper takes advantage of block scheduling to deepen students' learning in the academic and moral realms by focusing for weeks at a time on the lives of great people related to the theme under study, such as St. Francis, Albert Schweizer, or Helen Keller. In later grades students focus on great people such as Osiris, Krishna, Buddha, or Jesus. This is in keeping with Steiner's assertion that students build their moral imaginations through pictorial lessons; in this case, of the thoughts, words, and deeds of people who contributed to the welfare of others. Period teaching at the high school level appears in Mr. Hoechter's concentrated human biology block. It extends over a three-week period for two hours and forty-five minutes each morning and for several hours each evening during homework sessions. Students are able to focus fully on biology study to meet Mr. Hoechter's aim of having all students "well equipped" academically by the end of the block.

Curriculum, then, is a significant dimension that contributes to the structure of moral education in a Waldorf school. It is a particularly strong dimension due to the three features of teachers' freedom to implement curriculum, thematic topics based on students' developmental needs, and block scheduling designed to eliminate fragmentation. Each of these features is a strikingly unique approach to curriculum that I do not observe in other settings. To highlight the distinctiveness of the Waldorf curriculum, I compare curricular features at two public schools.

In regard to freedom to implement curriculum, I find that public school teachers operate on a continuum from little or no freedom to make curricular adaptations, to those who mix school district curriculum requirements with their own curricular units, to those who discard the official curriculum almost entirely. Waldorf educators fall somewhere in the middle of such a continuum, but I sense that their loyalty to the curriculum as indicated by Steiner is much greater than public school teachers who demonstrate a blend of teacher- and district-generated curriculum. I also sense that Waldorf teachers perceive the written curriculum as a unifying element of Waldorf education worldwide.

In regard to thematic topics at grade levels, I find that public school topics seem to appear in the curriculum according to previous practice in recent decades rather than according to an in-depth knowledge of students' developmental needs.

Where curriculum guidelines are weak or nonexistent, teachers select curriculum topics based primarily upon their own interests, such as a teddy bear unit in second grade or a Native American buffalo unit in sixth grade. Furthermore, thematic topics in public school classrooms I observe generally center on the material or technical characteristics of a topic, such as Eskimo history and life in a sixth grade class, physics principles and problems in a high school physics class, or sexually transmitted disease in a high school social problems class. It is not common to find curricular topics in which teachers deliberately present students with opportunities to immerse themselves in the manifestations of good and evil, such as appears in the Waldorf fourth grade study of Norse myths, for example, or the Waldorf high school study of the human body as one representation of the microcosm within the macrocosm. Additionally, curricular topics in a Waldorf school often include biographies of great people to provide students with models of goodness. Anything similar to this commitment to providing models of goodness is evident in only one out of five public school classrooms I observed during the past four years.

In regard to the curricular timetable, it is also uncommon to see public school teachers spend four to six weeks of concentrated time on one topic during a focused two-or three-hour lesson. Block scheduling is becoming more popular in public schools, but I do not observe its implementation in the concentrated manner that I observe in Waldorf schools.

Thus, while threads of teachers' freedom to implement curriculum, of thematic topics according to students' needs in the academic and moral realms, and of block scheduling may appear in public school classrooms, they are weak threads that do not provide the strong curricular foundation for moral education that the Waldorf curriculum provides. As the foregoing section outlines, the strength of the Waldorf curriculum as a framework for moral education manifests through three features, which reflect reciprocal influence from the curriculum, Anthroposophy, students' needs, and teachers' work. Teachers' work is one dimension that brings the curriculum to life and is the topic of the following section.

Waldorf Teachers' Work

Waldorf teachers' work is the fourth dimension of activity that contributes reciprocally to the wholistic structure of moral education. Teachers integrate the other three contributing dimensions by drawing upon Anthroposophical ideas as they interpret and implement curriculum in response to students' needs. While various facets of teachers' work exist, I examine two facets for the purposes of this paper. Two notable facets of teachers' contribution to moral education in a Waldorf school include teachers' inner work and outer work, which I describe below.

Teachers' inner work involves time in which teachers consciously reflect upon who they are as human beings. Teachers strive to improve themselves, often through study and meditation. Although I have found that self-reflection exists among teachers in other settings, teachers' inner work upon their own development and upon their investigation of life's deepest questions is unique among Waldorf educators because it is deliberate, is founded upon Anthroposophical literature and study groups, and is a shared topic of discussion among teachers. Throughout Anthroposophical literature, Steiner urges teachers to begin their educational task by acquiring self-knowledge that contributes to recognition of their character strengths and flaws. He states, "The first essential for a teacher is self-knowledge . . . The teacher must always keep himself in hand, and above all must never fall into the faults which he is blaming his children for" ([1924] 1974, 67). An example of teachers' inner work surfaces when Mr. Cooper states that the mainstay of moral education is the teacher who strives to exemplify goodness emanating from inner work on oneself. Mr. Cooper explains:

> Everyone falls short. The goal is that you're leading the class. The ego of the teacher has to be the ego of the class. . . So in the lower school, the ego of the teacher is important to hold them [the students] together. The striving of the teacher to be better in every way is important. The teacher has faults but tries to be a good person, and that has an effect on students.

Mr. Cooper's perspective reflects Steiner's repeated reminders to the first Waldorf school teachers that they are exemplars who have the opportunity to guide children's moral development. Rather than understanding truth, beauty, and

goodness in an abstract, intellectual way, children come to know these qualities through the verbal and nonverbal demeanor of their teacher, as Steiner explains:

> There is, however, the revelation which the child beholds in the gaze, in the gestures of the teacher, in the way in which the words of the teacher are spoken. It is the teacher himself whom the child--without uttering many words--calls truth, beauty and goodness from the revelations of his heart. (Steiner [1924] 1982, 87)

What children see expressed through the thoughts, words, and deeds of their teachers is the beginning of moral education in a Waldorf school. Teachers who engage in inner work through study of Anthroposophy, meditation, and reflection upon their strengths and weaknesses develop the capacity to educate students morally. At the high school level, Mr. Hoechter believes that moral education requires a quality of inner light:

> Moral education does not mean that you impose values on other people. You can cultivate certain values, of course, but you have to make it visible through what you do. Morality in words doesn't mean much. Morality is what students see in what you do and feel . . . When there's morality, the gold quality shines and there's an inner light there . . . [In a teacher] there must be a high quality of the gold.

Teachers who develop an inner light and strive to balance their own faculties of thinking, feeling, and willing can educate students morally through visible, outer work in the classroom.

Teachers' outer work consists of an artistic approach that rests upon self-knowledge in light of Anthroposophy, Steiner's curricular guidelines, and students' developmental needs. Other aspects of teachers' outer work are also important, such as teachers' everyday interaction with students in formal and informal ways. For the purposes of this paper, however, I focus on teachers' artistic instruction. According to Steiner, an artistic approach to teaching must flow from the teachers' own knowledge and experience. Therefore, Steiner recommends that Waldorf teachers begin their teaching by eliminating textbooks, which are common in public schools. Steiner cautions that, while textbooks are useful for instructing adults about the world, they "ruin the individuality of the child if we use them at school" (Steiner [1924] 1974, 50). Waldorf teachers rely instead upon artistic activities that

build children's moral imaginations, such as vivid stories, singing, dancing, painting, and handwork like woodworking, knitting, or weaving. Steiner recommends that teachers develop children's moral imagination in stages. Before the change of teeth, adults educate children morally by permitting a religious attitude of awe to develop out of imitation of goodness in the human environment. Between the change of teeth and puberty, teachers develop children's moral imagination by telling them stories or biographies of good and bad people so that children build a picture of goodness within themselves. Rather than moral precepts or commands, artistic activities develop children's sense of pleasure in the good, which is transformed into a quality of the soul so that the "natural need for pleasure in goodness can develop, as likewise displeasure in evil" ([1924] 1982, 88). After puberty, teachers begin to appeal to children's unfolding intellectual powers. Teachers can, for example, explain cause and effect relationships that promote understanding of historical impulses of humanity ([1919] 1976, 111-119). High school teachers still teach through pictorial language, poetry, drawing and painting, however. In a Waldorf school, this artistic approach to moral education is one in which teachers seek to re-awaken the child "at a higher level of soul" ([1924] 1982, 86). How does this look in classrooms?

In fourth grade, Mr. Cooper integrates artistic activities whether students are studying farm life or Norse myths to educate them morally, as he explains:

> Moral education is our attempting to educate the child through story and practical and artistic activities, such as speech and song, and to help the student bring out of him- or herself wisdom and love and justice.

He accomplishes this type of moral education when he tells (rather than reads) segments from a long Norse sage each day before recess; students are entranced. He leads, or asks students to lead, exquisite symphonies students create as they play songs on their recorders about Norse gods and goddesses. Students take delight in painting bold designs on Norse shields, using what they know about color harmonies that Mr. Cooper has taught them since first grade. Periodically, Mr. Cooper plays his accordion loudly and laughs with students as they stomp out the full-bodied rhythms of circle dances on their wooden classroom floor. It appears,

after observing students' enthusiastic engagement in such tasks, that these and other artistic activities are well suited to the children's visible and invisible growth.

In Mr. Hoechter's high school biology class, one significant element that contributes to moral education is his commitment to providing an artistic approach to science study. He structures curriculum content and activities according to a three-day rhythm that reflects the patterns of life and the rhythmic foundations laid by teachers in lower grades. He supports his adolescent students as they negotiate the difficult, lonely terrain of adolescence. Mr. Hoechter takes great care to eliminate as many death forces from his classroom and instruction as possible and to include as many lively artistic activities as he can. Mr. Hoechter's goal is to recognize the emerging death forces with which his students are dealing, yet to avoid stimulating the emergence of death forces in any artificial way or at too early a time for any student. Therefore, he avoids asking students to dissect dead body parts, for example, or to use commercial charts or models of the human body. Instead he uses an artistic approach to help students balance life and death forces. Through pictorial language and colored drawings he creates on the chalkboard, he describes each body part and its function. Mr. Hoechter believes that he best assists students' confrontation with emerging death forces by guiding students to develop their own intellectual thinking as they awaken more consciously to who they are as unique human beings. While the death and life forces are natural aspects of human development, Mr. Hoechter is also aware of "counterforces" that he deliberately seeks to eliminate in his classroom. He defines counterforces as influences that "try to mislead the human being of his/her rightbalanced and moral track and may use whatever forces to achieve this." Examples of counterforces are drugs, alcohol, consumerism, and mechanization. Mr. Hoechter therefore educates students about the dangers of substance abuse, and he requires students to create anatomy drawings by hand in an artistic style. Deliberately, he does not provide computers for students to produce mechanical reproductions of the human body. Additionally, he integrates poetry so that students experience the human body artistically. He selects a poem about the spiritual meaning of love and sexuality through the spoken, rhythmic word rather than the technological forum of videos or photographs. An

artistic approach to educating students is essential to Mr. Hoechter's outer work in the classroom.

Thus, teachers' work is a significant dimension within a Waldorf school. The reciprocal interaction between Anthroposophy, the curriculum, students' needs, and teachers' work forms a dynamic contribution to the structure of moral education.

An Appraisal of Moral Education At Spruce Park Waldorf School

Students at Spruce Park receive a distinctive type of moral education. They are immersed in a culture where the aim is to guide them to integrate their physical and spiritual beings and to become aware of their places in the universe. Such lofty goals are achievable only through the conscious efforts of dedicated people who share a common philosophy, view children in a consistent way, draw upon a mutually agreeable framework for subject matter, and apply similar methodologies. These four dimensions exist at Spruce Park in the form of a common philosophy through Anthroposophy, a consistent view of child development, an agreed-upon yet flexible curriculum, and similar teaching strategies. Table 3 summarizes the structure of moral education and four dimensions that interact and contribute to it.

As a researcher, I must ask what difference this wholistic approach to moral education has on children's lives. Such a question is difficult to answer without spending time with students and graduates of Spruce Park. I can, however, comment upon the strengths of this approach, as well as suggest one area that could be strengthened.

Table 3
A Summary of the Structure of Moral Education in a Waldorf School and Four Contributing Dimensions

The Structure of Moral Education
- -Freedom of the Individual to Draw Upon the Self for Ethical Ideals
- -Interest That Teachers Focus On and Cultivate Among Students
- -Artistic Attitude That Teachers Develop in Students

Anthroposophy as Related to Education
- -Harmonize the Spiritual Self with the Physical Self
- -Balance Thinking, Feeling, Willing
- -Recognize Humans as a Microcosm Within the Macrocosm

Needs of Students in Three General Stages of Child Development
- -Learn Through Imitation
  - -During Growth of Physical Body (Birth to Change of Teeth)
- -Learn Through Authority
  - -During Growth of Physical & Etheric Bodies (Change of Teeth to Puberty)
- -Learn Through Independent Judgment
  - -Growth of Physical and Astral Bodies (After Onset of Puberty)

Curriculum
- -Teachers' Freedom
- -Thematic Topics, with Accompanying Heroines and Heroes
- -Period Teaching

Teachers' Work
- -Inner Work Through Meditation, Reflection & Study of Anthroposophy
- -Outer Work Through Artistic Teaching Strategies

One strength of this approach to moral education is the possibility that a more in-depth type of moral education occurs as a result of the reciprocal interaction of Anthroposophy, students' needs, curriculum, and teachers' work. The common philosophy, goals, and strategies that teachers hold and integrate into their everyday work suggest that students may well receive a continuous and unified type of moral education throughout the grades. Furthermore, it may be possible that students at Spruce Park graduate with the ability to ask the deep questions of life about such

issues as their own purposes for living and their relationship to the whole of life. It may also be possible that an artistic approach to moral education prepares students to live more sensitive, aware, and sane lives as adults. Ultimately, if graduates of Spruce Park are good people, that is enough justification for this unique approach to moral education.

One area that could be scrutinized comes to mind as I reflect upon Steiner's concept of interest ([1912] 1995, 47). He explains that interest is significant in a moral sense because it leads to the "universal brotherhood of humanity" (48). When we take interest in objects or beings, we create the precondition for devoting ourselves to that thing or person. In the child-teacher relationship, Steiner explains, it is the teacher's interest in the child that guides the teacher's moral impulses toward helping that child. Waldorf teachers demonstrate such interest in countless ways. For example, teachers shake hands with every student daily to establish contact and read the mood of the child (Uhrmacher 1993b); in other words, to demonstrate and revitalize interest in each child day after day. Other examples include teachers' remaining with their classes through all eight grades, writing poems and detailed anecdotal accounts about each child rather than merely filling in institutional report cards, or creating a celtic knot bookmark for every child's birthday. These and numerous other acts of interest distinguish Waldorf teachers from teachers in other settings. These acts of interest are essential in a world where few people have the ability to commune deeply as one human to another, Steiner reminds us. Yet, it is possible that this aspect of interest may be deepened if Waldorf educators evaluated the whole group teaching method that teachers seem to rely upon almost exclusively, a method borrowed from the German model of education in Steiner's culture and era. In American culture where people are less formal and where societal problems stemming from materialism, fragmentation, and alienation are common, I suggest that Waldorf educators explore Steiner's concept of interest more deeply by establishing warmer, less formal contact with students through small-group lessons. Teachers' authority need not be diminished if they sit around a table with several students to read a Norse myth or discuss the function of the human liver while other students finish a sock they are knitting or complete illustrations in

main lesson books. Through informal, small-group lessons, teachers may have the opportunity to know students better as learners, both in the academic and moral realms. Engaged closely with a few children at a time, teachers may be better able to create the curriculum at each moment by reading from the child what ought to be done to educate best (Steiner [1919] 1976, 189). By integrating small-group teaching strategies, it is possible that Waldorf teachers can establish deeper levels of interest in students and provide an antidote to apathy or alienation that children may meet in their lives outside of school. Since focused interest in students is one foundational concept of moral education in Steiner's view, it may be a concept worth exploring as teachers seek to respond to each child in both the physical and spiritual realms.

Conclusion

Moral education flourishes at Spruce Park Waldorf School and can contribute to educators' understanding of moral education in other settings. I believe that public school educators can learn from at least three aspects of the Waldorf approach. First, the Waldorf curriculum deserves attention from educators in other settings as a unique instrument for educating children morally according to stages of child development. As a public school teacher I am able to use aspects of the Waldorf curriculum, such as telling fairy tales, avoiding intellectual discussions of the moral points, and providing opportunities for students to reflect upon them through artistic activities. Whether educators in other settings agree with the rationale for Steiner's indicated curriculum, the curriculum itself can be a starting point for curriculum design in other settings. Second, public educators can learn from Waldorf teachers' ability to integrate the stories of great people's lives into thematic study blocks. The heroines and heroes in the Waldorf curriculum are historical and contemporary models of goodness whose lives provide alternatives to popular sports or entertainment heroes. Third, educators in other settings who are concerned about the societal effects of materialism, violence, and substance abuse may benefit their students by broadening teaching strategies to integrate artistic activities. This may enable teachers to rely less on intellectual approaches to moral education and more on artistic approaches that build students' moral imaginations.

In sum, it is the dynamic and reciprocal interaction among four dimensions of activity that contribute to the structure of moral education in a Waldorf school. From the spiritual realm, Anthroposophy provides a philosophy that informs action. In the physical realm, students' needs motivate practical application of that philosophy, the curriculum provides a flexible framework of thematic topics that match students' developmental needs, and teachers' artistic work awakens students' inner capacities. The Waldorf curriculum is one powerful dimension within a fourfold system, not only because it rests upon the philosophical foundation of Anthroposophy, everyday needs of students, and the actions of reflective teachers, but also because of three unique features. The freedom teachers have to implement the curriculum, the practical and symbolic aspects of the thematic topics, and the deep learning that can occur during blocks of study all contribute powerfully to moral education in a Waldorf school. While not all Waldorf perspectives and practices apply to educational aims in other settings, the Waldorf approach to moral education is worth examining as educators in public and private schools seek to educate students fully.

I gratefully acknowledge helpful suggestions and comments on an earlier draft of this paper by Bruce Uhrmacher and Nick Cutforth, as well as model constructions by Robert Armon and computer graphics by Craig Yarborough.

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